

What is claimed is:

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1 4. The method of claim 3 further comprises the steps of:

2 sending the signal to an early-retirement unit; and

3 the early-retirement unit arranging for the instruction to be terminated.

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- 1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the various processing stages include one or more
2 of the following stages: fetching, issuing, sorting, executing, queuing, and retiring.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the instruction capable of early retirement includes
2 an identification tag for identifying whether the instruction is capable of early
3 retirement.
- 1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein NO-OP instructions, pre-fetch instructions, branch
2 instructions, nullified instructions, and predicated-false instructions are identified
3 as instructions capable of early retirement.
- 1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the criteria for early retirement are met when
2 continued processing the instruction does not change the architectural state of the
3 system processing the instruction.
- 1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the criteria for early retirement are met when
2 continued processing the instruction does not change the behavior of the program
3 running the instruction.
- 1 10. A computer-readable medium embodying instructions that cause a computer to
2 perform a method for retiring instructions processed through various processing
3 stages, the method comprising the steps of:
4 processing an instruction capable of early retirement until the instruction
5 meets the criteria for early retirement;
6 indicating that the instruction has met the early-retirement criteria;

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7 processing the instruction to a desirable stage at which, based on the
8 indication that the instruction has met the early-retirement criteria,
9 the instruction is terminated out of order of a program running the
10 instruction; and
11 updating a state of a system processing the instruction to reflect that the
12 instruction has been terminated.

1 11. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the desirable stage includes
2 an instruction queue.

1 12. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the step of indicating
2 comprises the step of generating a signal associated with the instruction.

1 13. The computer-readable medium of claim 12 wherein the method further comprises
2 the steps of:
3 sending the signal to an early-retirement unit; and
4 the early-retirement unit arranging for the instruction to be terminated.

1 14. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the various processing stages
2 include one or more of the following stages: fetching, issuing, sorting, executing,
3 queuing, and retiring.

1 15. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the instruction capable of
2 early retirement includes an identification tag for identifying whether the
3 instruction is capable of early retirement.

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1 16. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein NO-OP instructions, pre-
2 fetch instructions, branch instructions, nullified instructions, and predicated-false
3 instructions are identified as instructions capable of early retirement.

1 17. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the criteria for early
2 retirement are met when continued processing the instruction does not change the
3 architectural state of the system processing the instruction.

1 18. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the criteria for early
2 retirement are met when continued processing the instruction does not change the
3 behavior of the program running the instruction.

1 19. A system for retiring instructions processed through various processing stages,
2 comprising:

3 first processing means for processing an instruction capable of early
4 retirement until the instruction meets the criteria for early
5 retirement;

6 indicating means for indicating that the instruction has met the early-
7 retirement criteria;

8 second processing means for processing the instruction to a desirable stage
9 at which, based on the indication that the instruction has met the
10 early-retirement criteria, the instruction is terminated out of order of
11 a program running the instruction; and

12 updating means for updating a state of the system to reflect that the
13 instruction has been terminated.

A 1 20. The system of claim 19 wherein the desirable stage includes an instruction queue.

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